

Black History 1517-1997



Ohio Historical Society



Corbis



Library of Congress



Denver Public Library



Bill Gentile / ZUMA Press



Library of Congress

Prepared by SFC Pernol EOA 11D

c. 1517

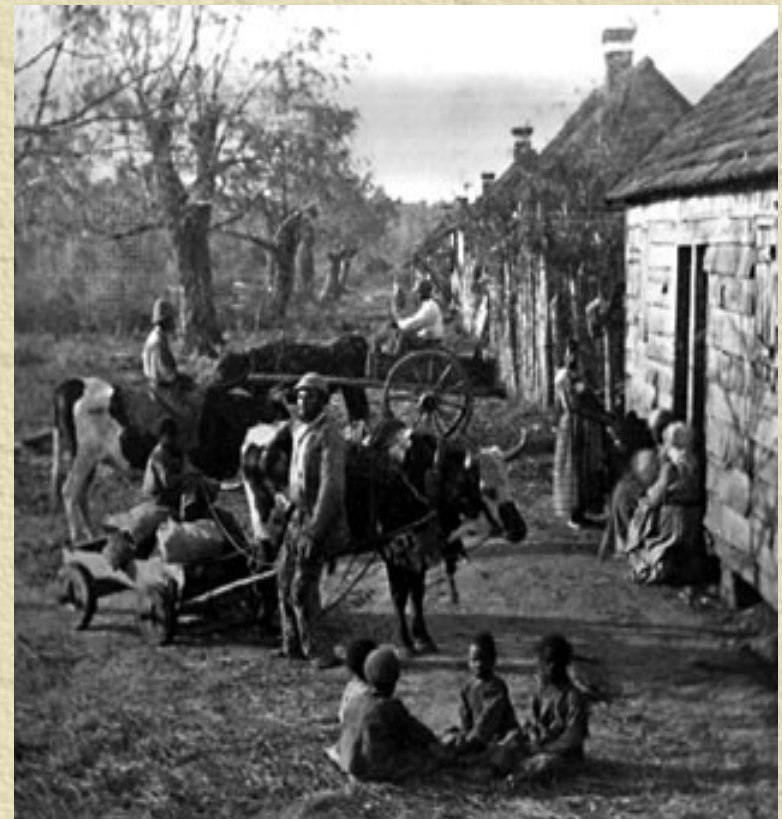
Black plantation slavery begins in the New World when Spaniards begin importing slaves from Africa to replace Indians who died from harsh working conditions and exposure to disease.

TO BE SOLD, on board the
Ship *Bance-Island*, on tuesday the 6th
of May next, at *Affley-Ferry*; a choice
cargo of about 250 fine healthy

NEGROES,
just arrived from the
Windward & Rice Coast.
—The utmost care has
already been taken, and
shall be continued, to keep them free from
the least danger of being infected with the
SMALL-POX, no boat having been on
board, and all other communication with
people from *Charles-Town* prevented.

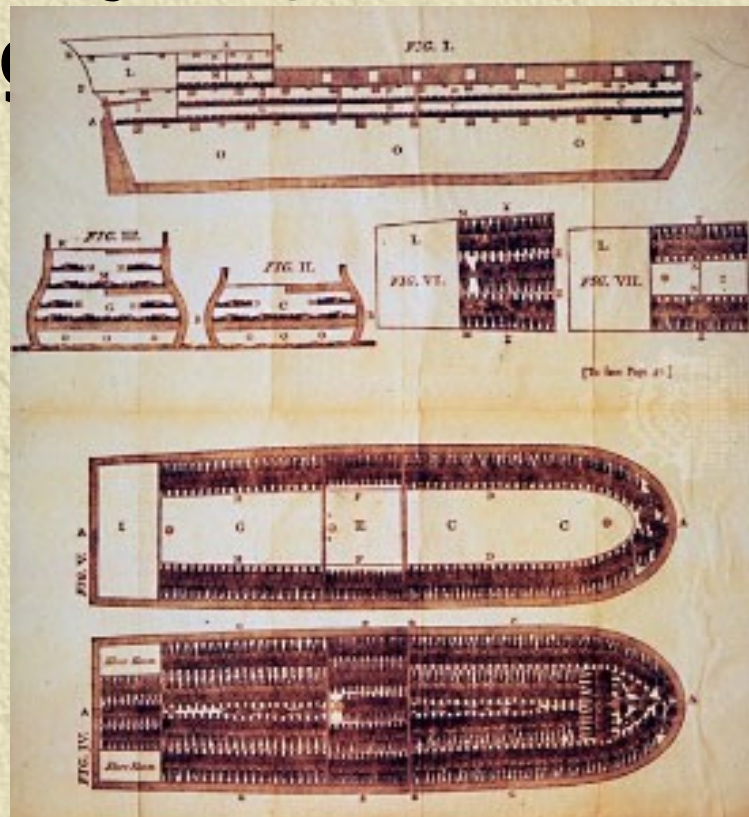
Austin, Laurens, & Appleby.

N. B. Full one Half of the above Negroes have had the
SMALL-POX in their own Country.



1619


A Dutch ship with 20 African slaves aboard arrives at the English colony of Jamestown, Virginia



1739

The Stono Rebellion, one of the earliest slave insurrections, leads to the deaths of at least 20 whites and more than 40 blacks west of Charleston in the black-majority colony of South Carolina.





1746

Lucy Terry composes the poem "Bars Fight," the earliest extant poem by an African-American. Transmitted orally for more than 100 years, it first appears in print in 1855. Consisting of 28 lines in irregular iambic tetrameter, the poem commemorates white settlers who were killed in an encounter with Indians in 1746. Terry was considered a born storyteller and poet. She was also a persuasive orator, successfully negotiating a land case before the Supreme Court of Vermont. She delivered a three-hour address to the board of trustees of Williams College in a vain attempt to gain admittance for one of her sons.

1770

Crispus

escaped

British soldiers

Massacre

first men to die in the cause



an

killed by

the Boston

one of the

first men to die in the cause

c. 1772

Jean-Baptist-Point Du Sable builds a fur-trading post on the Chicago River at Lake Michigan. Its success leads to the settlement that later



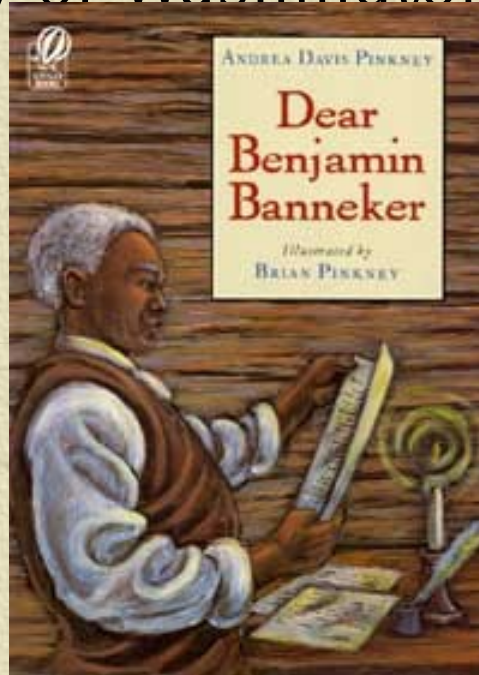
1773

Phillis Wheatley, the first notable black woman poet in the United States, is acclaimed in Europe and America following publication in England of her *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious*



1790

Benjamin Banneker, mathematician and compiler of almanacs, is appointed by President George Washington to the District of Columbia Commission, where he works on the survey of Washington, D.C.



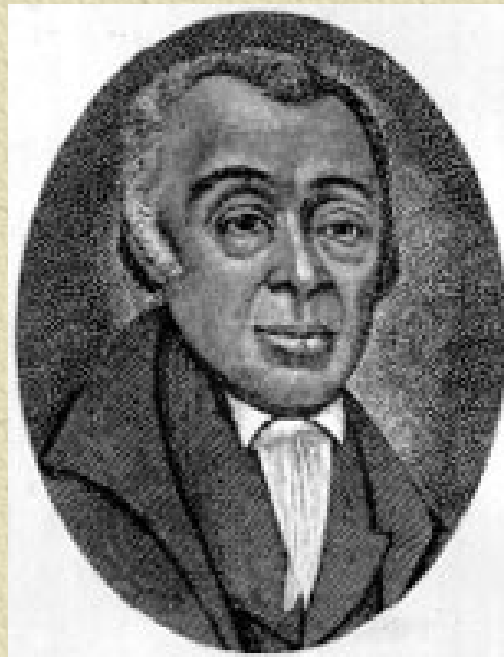
1793


Congress passes the first
Fugitive Slave Act, making it a
crime to harbour an escaped
slave or to interfere with his or
her arrest



1799

Richard Allen becomes
the first ordained black
minister of the Methodist
Episcopal Church.






1800

Gabriel (Prosser) plans the first major slave rebellion in U.S. history, massing more than 1,000 armed slaves near Richmond, Va. Following the failed revolt, 35 slaves, including Gabriel, are hanged.

1816

The **African Methodist Episcopal Church** is formally organized and consecrates Richard Allen as its first bishop.



1817

The

American Colonization Society

is established to transport
freeborn blacks and
emancipated slaves to Africa,
leading to foundation of a colony
that becomes the Republic of
1820
Liberia in 1847.

The **Missouri Compromise**

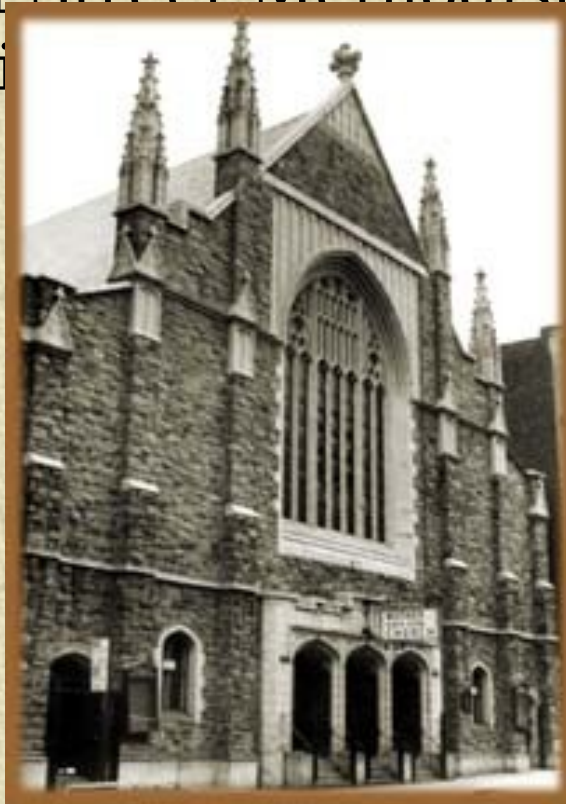
provides for Missouri to be
admitted to the Union as a slave
state, Maine as a free state, and
western territories north of
Missouri's southern border to be
free soil.


1821

The

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

is organized, developing from a congregation of blacks who left the John Street Methodist Church in 1786 because of discrimination.





1822

Freedman **Denmark Vesey** plans the most extensive slave revolt in U.S. history. The Charleston rebellion is betrayed before the plan can be effected, leading to the hanging of Vesey and 34 others.


1829

Abolitionist **David Walker** publishes a pamphlet entitled *Appeal . . . to the Colored Citizens of the World . . .*, calling for a slave revolt. Radical for the time, it is accepted by a small minority of Abolitionist

1831

William Lloyd Garrison begins publishing the antislavery newspaper *The Liberator*, advocating emancipation for black Americans held in bondage.





1831

Nat Turner leads the only effective, sustained slave rebellion in U.S. history, attracting up to 75 fellow slaves and killing 60 whites. After the defeat of the insurrection, Turner is hanged on November 11.

1833

The **American Anti-Slavery Society**, the main activist arm of the Abolitionist movement, is founded under the leadership of William Lloyd Garrison.

1839

Slaves revolt on the Spanish slave ship *Amistad* in the Caribbean. After their arrest in Long Island Sound, former U.S. president John Quincy Adams successfully defends the rebels before the Supreme Court.

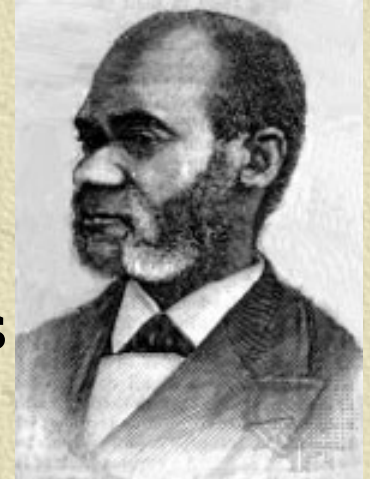


1840

The **Liberty Party** holds its first national convention in Albany, N.Y. In opposition to fellow Abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, members believe in political action to further antislavery goals.

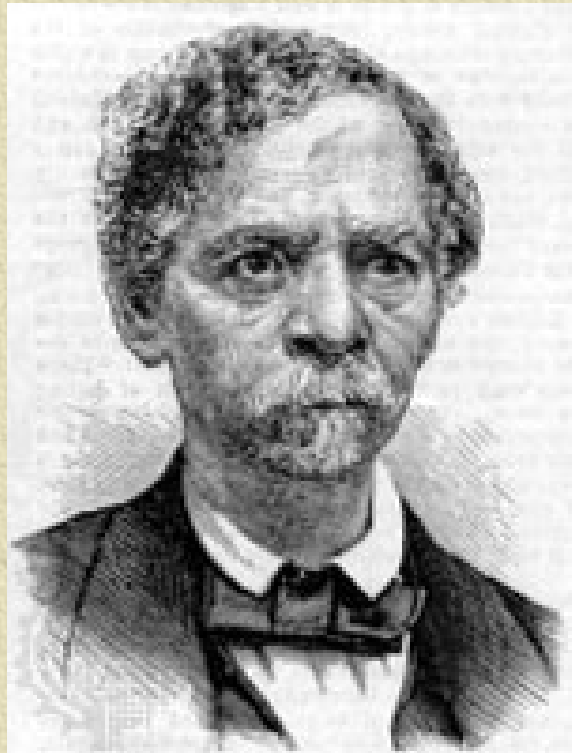
1843

In a speech at the national convention of free people of colour, **Henry Highland Garnet**, Abolitionist and clergyman, calls upon slaves to murder their masters.



1847

Joseph Jenkins Roberts, the son of free blacks in Virginia, is elected the first president of Liberia. In 1849 he secures British recognition of Liberia as a sovereign nation.



1847

Frederick Douglass begins publication of the *North Star*, an antislavery newspaper, contributing to his break with white Abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, publisher of *Liberator*.



1848

The **Free Soil Party**, a minor but influential political party opposed to the extension of slavery into the western

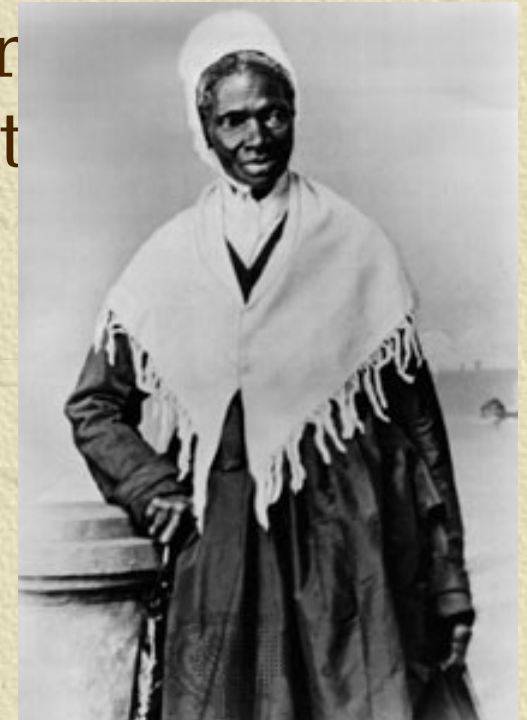
1850

territories, nominates former

president Martin Van Buren to

the Abolitionist movement,


Sojourner Truth travels throughout the Midwest, developing a reputation for personal magnetism and drawing large crowds.



1850

Harriet Tubman returns to Maryland to guide members of her family to freedom via the Underground Railroad. Later helping more than 300 slaves to escape, she comes to be known as the "Moses of her people."





1850

Congress passes a series of **compromise measures** affecting California, Utah, New Mexico, Texas, and the District of Columbia in an effort to maintain an even balance between free and slave states.

1853

Episcopalian minister **Alexander Crummell** becomes a missionary and teacher in Liberia, advocating a program of religious conversion and economic and social development.

1853

William Wells Brown--a former slave, Abolitionist, historian, and physician--publishes *Clotel*, the first novel by a black American.



1854

Author **Frances E.W. Harper's** most popular verse collection, *Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects*, is published, containing the antislavery poem "Bury Me in a Free Land"

1855


John Mercer Langston, a former slave, is elected clerk of Brownhelm Township in Ohio. He is the first black to win an elective political office in the United States.



1856

Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church found **Wilberforce University**. After the university is closed during the Civil War, it is bought and reopened by the African Methodist Episcopal Church.






1856

In the ongoing contest between pro- and antislavery forces in **Kansas**, a mob sacks the town of Lawrence, a "hotbed of abolitionism," leading to retaliation by John Brown at Pottawatomie Creek.

1857

In its **Dred Scott decision**, the U.S. Supreme Court legalizes slavery in all the territories, exacerbating the sectional controversy and pushing the nation toward civil war.



1859

Harriet E. Wilson writes *Our Nig*, a largely autobiographical novel about racism in the North before the Civil War.

1859

The U.S. Supreme Court, in *Ableman v. Booth*, overrules an act by a Wisconsin state court that declared the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 unconstitutional.

c. 1859

Martin R. Delany, physician and advocate of black nationalism, leads a party to West Africa to investigate the Niger Delta as a site for settlement of African-Americans.



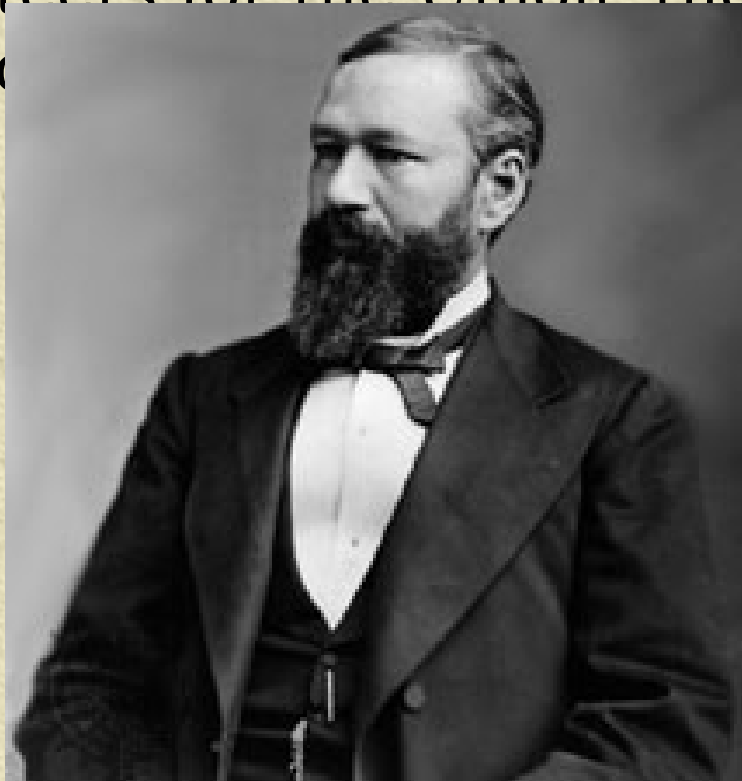
1861

The **Civil War** begins in Charleston, S.C., as the Confederates open fire on Fort Sumter



c. 1861

Pinckney Pinchback runs the Confederate blockade on the Mississippi to reach New Orleans. There he recruits a company of black volunteers for the Union the Corps d'Afrique



1862

Future U.S. congressman **Robert Smalls** and 12 other slaves seize control of a Confederate armed frigate in Charleston harbour. They turn it over to the Union Navy. The frigate is renamed the USS *Planter*. The Union Navy's first all-black squadron is formed.

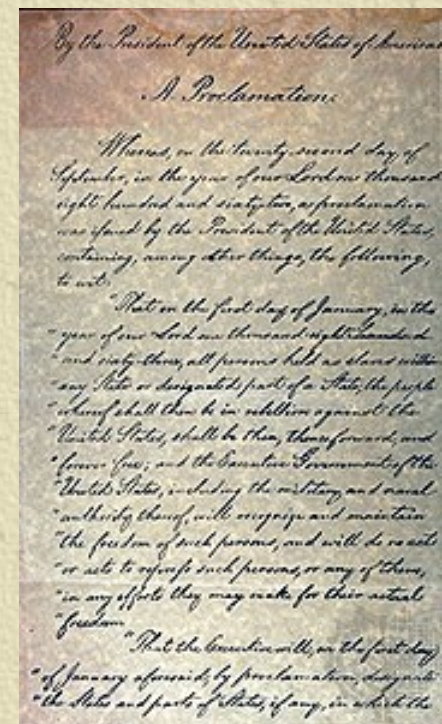


1862

The second **Confiscation Act** is passed, stating that slaves of civilian and military Confederate officials "shall be forever free," enforceable only in areas of the South occupied by the Union Army.

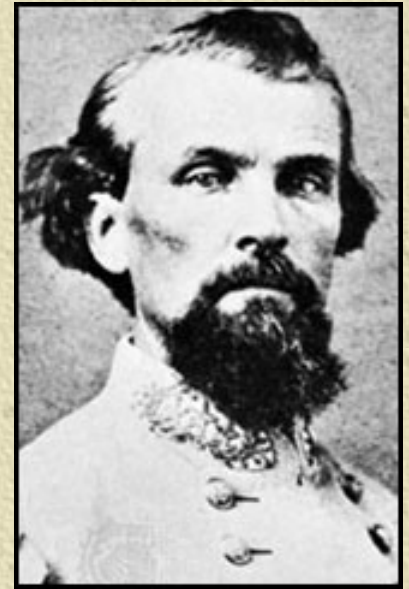
1863

President Abraham Lincoln signs the **Emancipation Proclamation** on January 1



1864

In April, 1864, Forrest and his men captured Fort Pillow in Jackson, Tennessee. The fort contained 262 African American and 295 white soldiers. It was afterwards claimed that most of these soldiers were killed after they surrendered. After the war an official investigation discovered evidence that "the Confederates were guilty of atrocities which included murdering most of the garrison after it surrendered, burying Negro soldiers alive, and setting fire to tents containing Federal wounded." After the war Forrest helped establish the Ku Klux Klan and became its first Grand Wizard in May, 1867



1864

President Lincoln refuses to sign the **Wade-Davis bill**, which requires greater assurances of loyalty to the Union from white citizens and reconstructed governments.

1865

The **Civil War** ends on April 26, after the surrender of the Confederate generals Robert E. Lee and J.E. John



1865

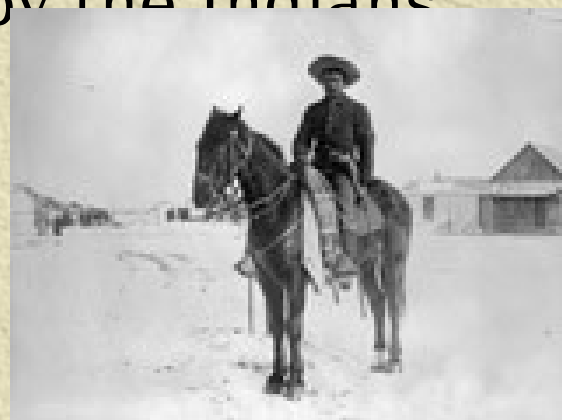
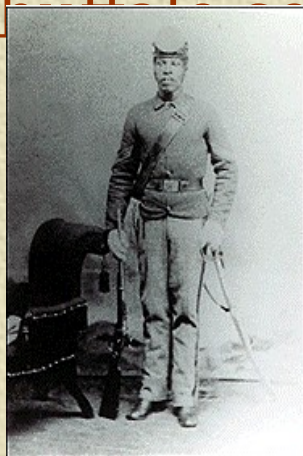
Congress establishes the U.S. Bureau of Refugees, **Freedmen,** and Abandoned Lands to aid four million black Americans in transition from slavery to freedom



c. 1866

The states of the former Confederacy pass "**black code**" laws to replace the social controls removed by the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment

The U.S. Army forms black cavalry and infantry regiments. Serving in the West from 1867 to 1896 and fighting Indians on the frontier, they are nicknamed "**buffalo soldiers**" by the Indians



1866

With the complicity of local civilian authorities and police, rioting whites kill 35 black citizens of **New Orleans** and wound more than 100, leading to increased support for vigorous Reconstruction policies.

Howard University, a predominantly black university, is founded in Washington, D.C. It is named for General Oliver Otis Howard, head of



Civil War



1870

The

Colored Methodist Episcopal Church

is organized, four years after the first efforts among black members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to develop an independent

1870 church.

Joseph Hayne Rainey is the first black elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. This congressman from South Carolina will enjoy the longest tenure of any black during Reconstruction.



1870

Hiram R. Revels of Mississippi takes the former seat of Jefferson Davis in the U.S. Senate, becoming the only black in the U.S. Congress and the first elected to the Senate



1872

John R. Lynch, speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives, is elected to the U.S. Congress.



1877

Reconstruction ends as the last Federal troops are withdrawn. Southern conservatives regain control of their state governments through fraud, violence, and intimidation.

1879

Author Joel Chandler Harris' "**Tar-Baby**," an animal tale told by the Uncle Remus character, popularizes the sticky tar doll figure of black American folktales.



1881

**Tuskegee Normal and Industrial I
nstitute**

in Alabama is founded on July 4
with Booker T. Washington as the
scho



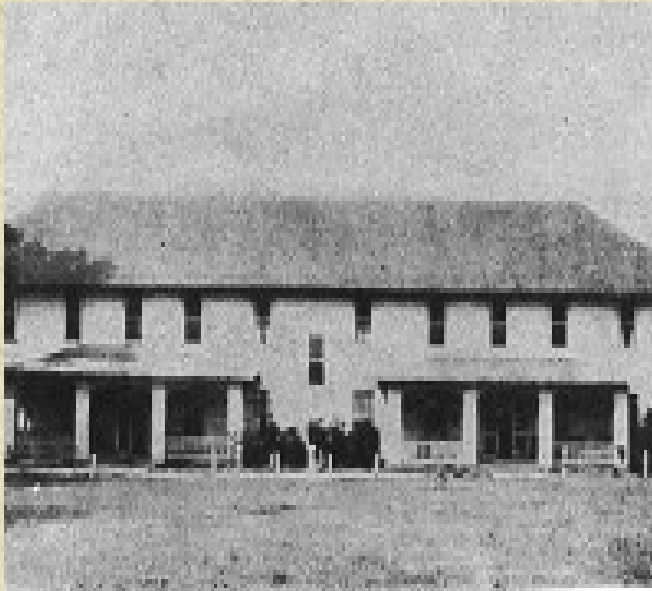
1883

Inventor **Jan Ernst Matzeliger** patents his shoe-lasting machine that shapes the upper portions of shoes. His invention wins swift acceptance and soon supplants hand methods of production



1887

Florida A&M University is founded as the State Normal (teacher-training) School for Colored Students.



1887

Journalist **T. Thomas Fortune** begins editing the *New York Age*. His well-known editorials defend the civil rights of blacks and condemn racial discrimination.



1892


The offices of the *Memphis Free Speech* are destroyed following editorials of part-owner **Ida B. Wells** denouncing the lynching of three of her friends.



c. 1895

Cornetist **Buddy Bolden**, semi-legendary founding father of jazz, leads a band in New Orleans.





1895

A merger of three major black Baptist conventions leads to the formation of the **National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.**, in Atlanta, Ga.

1895

At the Atlanta Exposition, educator Booker T. Washington delivers his "**Atlanta Compromise**" speech, stressing the importance of vocational education for blacks over social equality or political office

1896

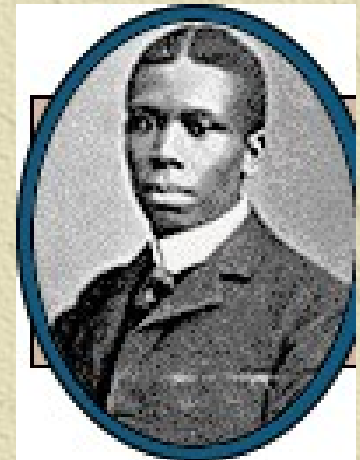
Believing African-Americans to be the descendants of the "lost tribes of Israel," Prophet William S. Crowdy founds the **Church of God and Saints of Christ.**

1896

Mary Church Terrell becomes the first president of the National Association of Colored Women, working for educational and social

1896

Paul Laurence Dunbar, acclaimed as "the poet laureate of the Negro race," publishes *Lyrics of Lowly Life*, containing some of the finest verses of his *Oak and Ivy* and *Majors and Minors*.



1899

Composer and pianist **Scott Joplin** publishes "The Maple Leaf Rag," one of the most important and popular compositions during the era of ragtime, precursor to jazz.



1901

Booker T. Washington dines with President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House. The dinner meeting is bitterly criticized by many whites, who view it as a marked departure from racial etiquette.



1903

W.E.B. Du Bois publishes *The Souls of Black Folk*, which declares that "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line," and discusses the dual identity of black Americans.

1903

In protest to the ideology of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois suggests the concept of the "**Talented Tenth**"--a college-trained leadership cadre responsible for elevating blacks economically and culturally



1904

Joe Gans, perhaps the greatest fighter in the history of the lightweight division, loses to welterweight champion Jersey Joe Walcott in a 20-round draw.



1905

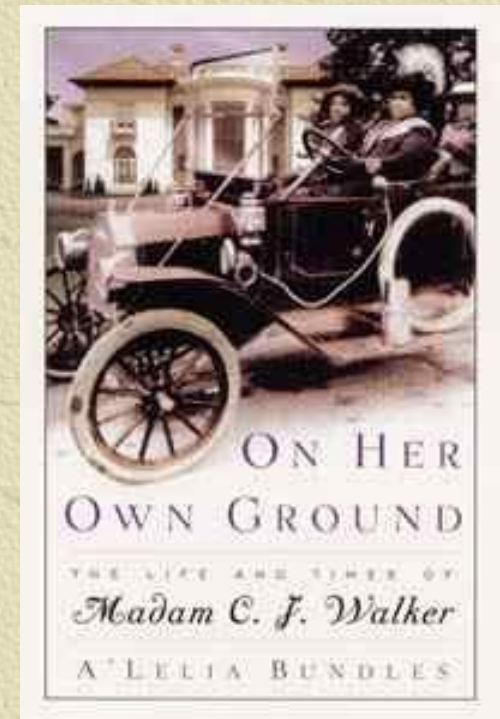
The **Niagara Movement** is founded as a group of black intellectuals from across the nation meet near Niagara Falls, Ont., adopting resolutions demanding full equality in American life.

1905

Madame C.J. Walker develops and markets a method for straightening curly hair, on her way to becoming the first black female millionaire in the United States.



ON HER OWN GROUND:
The Life and Times of Madam C. J. Walker is the first truly comprehensive biography of this early twentieth century trailblazer. A'Lelia Bundles, Madam Walker's great-great-grand -daughter, eloquently seduces with time and place as she chronicles Walker's rise from St. Louis washerwoman to





1906

President Theodore Roosevelt orders 167 black infantrymen be given dishonourable discharges because of their conspiracy of silence regarding the shooting death of a white citizen in

1906

After educator John Hope becomes its president, Atlanta Baptist College expands its curriculum and is renamed **Morehouse College**.

1907

Black Primitive Baptist congregations formed by emancipated slaves after the Civil War organize the

National Primitive Baptist Convention, Inc.

1908

In **Springfield, Ill.**, the home town of Abraham Lincoln, the black community is assaulted by several thousand white citizens and two elderly blacks are lynched.

A group of whites shocked by the Springfield riot of 1908 merge with W.E.B. Du Bois's Niagara Movement, forming the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**

1910

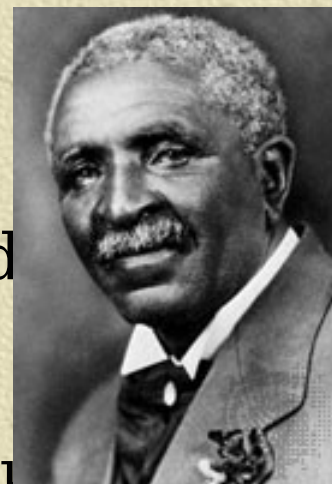
- ***The Crisis***, a monthly magazine published by the NAACP, is founded. W.E.B. Du Bois edits the magazine for its first 24 years.

1911

The National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes (**National Urban League**) is formed in New York City with the mission to help migrating blacks find jobs and housing and adjust to urban life.

Timothy Drew, known as Prophet Noble Drew Ali, founds the **Moorish Science Temple of America** in Newark, N.J. His central teaching is that blacks are of Muslim origin.

George Washington Carver of the Tuskegee Institute reveals his experiments concerning peanuts and sweet potatoes, popularizing alternative crops and aiding the renewal of depleted land in the South.

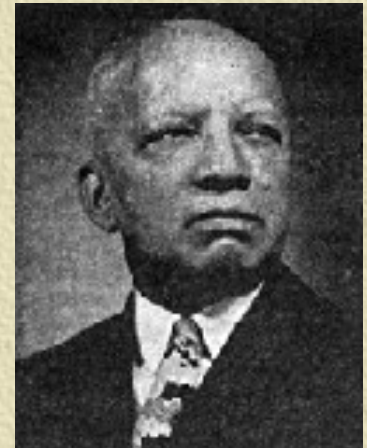


1914

The

Universal Negro Improvement Association is founded by Marcus Garvey in his homeland of Jamaica to further racial pride and economic self-sufficiency and to ~~1915~~ establish a black nation in Africa.

Historian **Carter G. Woodson** founds the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in an attempt to assist the accurate and proper study of African-American history.



1915

Jack Johnson, first black heavyweight champion of the world, loses the title to Jess Willard, in 26



1915

A schism in the National Baptist Convention yields the **National Baptist Convention of America**, the largest black church in the United States.
Racial antagonism toward blacks newly employed in war industries leads to riots that kill 40 blacks and 8 whites in **East Saint Louis, Ill.**

1918

James Van Der Zee and his wife open the Guarantee Photo Studio in Harlem. The portraits he shoots later become a treasured chronicle of the Harlem Renaissance.



1919

During the "Red Summer" following World War I, 13 days of racial violence on the **South Side of Chicago** leave 23 blacks and 15 whites dead, 537 people injured, and 10,000 black families homeless.

A'Lelia Walker inherits the family business and estate upon the death of her mother, Madame C.J. Walker. In the 1920s she entertains the leading writers and artists of the Harlem Renaissance.

Marcus Garvey, leader of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, addresses 25,000 blacks at Madison Square Garden and presides over a parade of 50,000 through the streets of Harlem.



1921

Oscar Charleston, perhaps the best all-around baseball player in the history of the Negro leagues, leads his league in doubles, triples, and home runs, batting .434 for the year.

1922

Louis Armstrong leaves New Orleans, arriving in Chicago to play second trumpet in cornetist King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band. Armstrong's work in the 1920s would revolutionize jazz.



1922

Aviator **Bessie Coleman**, who later refuses to perform before segregated audiences in the South, stages the first public flight by an African-American woman.



1923

Charles Clinton Spaulding becomes president of the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company. He builds it into the nation's largest black-owned business by the time of his death in 1952.



1923

Pianist and orchestrator **Fletcher Henderson** becomes a bandleader. His prestigious band advances the careers of such black musicians as Louis Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins



1923

Poet and novelist **Jean Toomer** publishes his masterpiece, *Cane*, an experimental novel often considered one of the greatest achievements of the Harlem Renais



Toomer (right) with his wife, Margery Latimer, 1932

1923

Blues singer **Bessie Smith**, discovered by pianist-composer Clarence Williams, makes her first recording. She will eventually become known as "Empress of the Blues."



1924

Spelman Seminary, which began awarding college degrees in 1901, becomes **Spelman College**. The school began in 1881 with two Boston women teaching 11 black women in an Atlanta church basement.



1925

The New Negro, an anthology of fiction, poetry, drama, and essays associated with the Harlem Renaissance, is edited by **Alain Locke**.



1925

In an era when **Ku Klux Klan** membership exceeds 4,000,000 nationally, a parade of 50,000 unmasked members takes



1925

Countee Cullen, one of the finest poets of the Harlem Renaissance, publishes his first collection of poems, *Color*, to critical acclaim before graduating from New York University.



1925

Singer and dancer **Josephine Baker** goes to Paris to dance at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in *La Revue nègre*, becoming one of the most popular entertainers in



1925

A. Philip Randolph, trade unionist and civil-rights leader, founds the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, which becomes the first successful black trade union.



1925

At a historic literary awards banquet during the Harlem Renaissance, **Langston Hughes** earns first place in poetry with *The Weary Blues*, which is read aloud by James Weldon Johnson.



1926

The literary journal *Fire!!*, edited by young writer Wallace Thurman, publishes its first and only issue. The short-lived publication remains highly influential among the participants of the Harlem Renaissance

c. 1926

Pianist, composer, and self-proclaimed inventor of jazz *Jelly Roll Morton* records several of his masterpieces, including "Black Bottom Stomp" and "Dead Man Blues."



1927

James Weldon Johnson, poet and anthologist of black culture, publishes *God's Trombones*, a group of black dialect sermons in verse accompanied by the illustrations of Aaron Douglas.



1927

Poet and playwright **Angelina Weld Grimké** publishes *Caroling Dusk*, an anthology of her poetry edited by Countee Cullen.



1927

Painter **Henry Ossawa Tanner**, whose works include "The Raising of Lazarus," becomes the first black American to be granted full membership in the National Academy of Design.

1928

Poet and novelist **Claude McKay** publishes *Home to Harlem*, the first fictional work by an African-American to reach the best-seller lists.



1929

John Hope, noted advocate of advanced liberal arts instruction for blacks, is chosen as president of Atlanta University, the first graduate school for African-Americans.



1930

Benjamin Oliver Davis, Sr., becomes the first black colonel in the U.S. Army. He later oversees race relations and the morale of black soldiers in World War II and becomes the first black general in 1940.



1931

Walter White begins his tenure as executive secretary of the NAACP, his principal objective being the abolition of lynching. By the time of his death in 1955, lynchings would become a rarity.



1932

In **Tuskegee, Ala.**, the U.S. Public Health Service begins examining the course of untreated syphilis in black men, not telling them of their syphilis or their participation in the 40-year study.



Taliaferro Clark,
Head of the Public
Health Service
at the beginning of

1932

Wallace Thurman, young literary rebel of the Harlem Renaissance, publishes his satiric novel *Infants of the Spring*.



1934

Wallace D. Fard, founder of the Nation of Islam movement, disappears, leading to the rise of Elijah Muhammad.



1936

Track-and-field athlete **Jesse Owens** wins four gold medals in the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. His victories derail Adolf Hitler's intended use of the games as a show of Aryan supremacy.



c. 1936

Delta blues musician **Robert Johnson** makes his legendary and influential recordings in Texas, including "Me and the Devil Blues," "Hellhound on My Trail," and "Love in Vain."

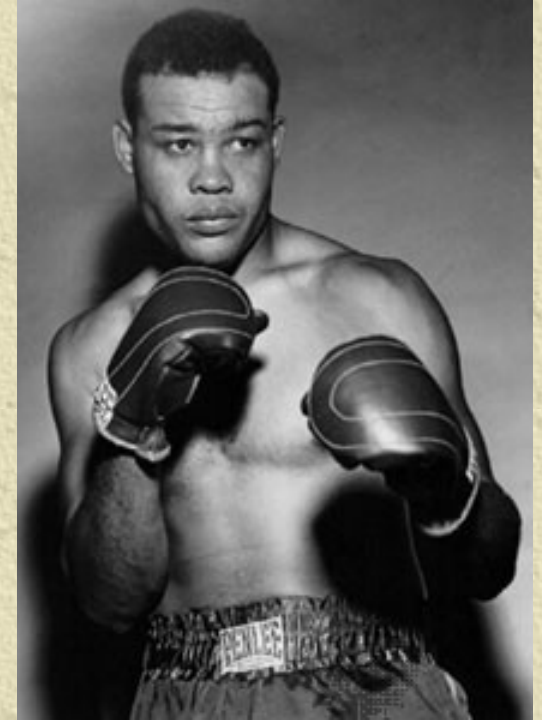
1937

Writer and folklorist **Zora Neale Hurston** publishes her second novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, which receives considerable acclaim and criticism within the black community.



1938

In a knockout in the first round of their rematch, heavyweight champion **Joe Louis** wreaks vengeance on Max Schmeling of Germany, the only boxer to have knocked out Louis in his prime.



c. 1938

Assisted by saxophonist Lester Young, her romantic companion during these years, jazz vocalist **Billie Holiday** makes several of her finest recordings.



c. 1939

Count Basie leads his legendary Kansas City band, including saxophonist Lester Young, trumpeter Buck Clayton, guitarist Freddie Green, bassist Walter Page, and drummer Jo Jones.



1939

Singer **Marian Anderson** performs at the Lincoln Memorial before an audience of 75,000 after the Daughters of the American Revolution refused to allow her to sing at Constitution Hall.



1939

The NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund is organized. **Charles Hamilton Houston** spearheads the effort to consolidate some of the nation's best legal talents in the fight against legally sanctioned bias.

1940

Author **Richard Wright** publishes his masterpiece, *Native Son*. The stark, tragic realism of this novel immediately places Wright in the front ranks of contemporary American writers.



c. 1940

Painter **Jacob Lawrence** begins work on his 60-panel "Migration" series, which depicts the journey of African-Americans from the South to the urban North.

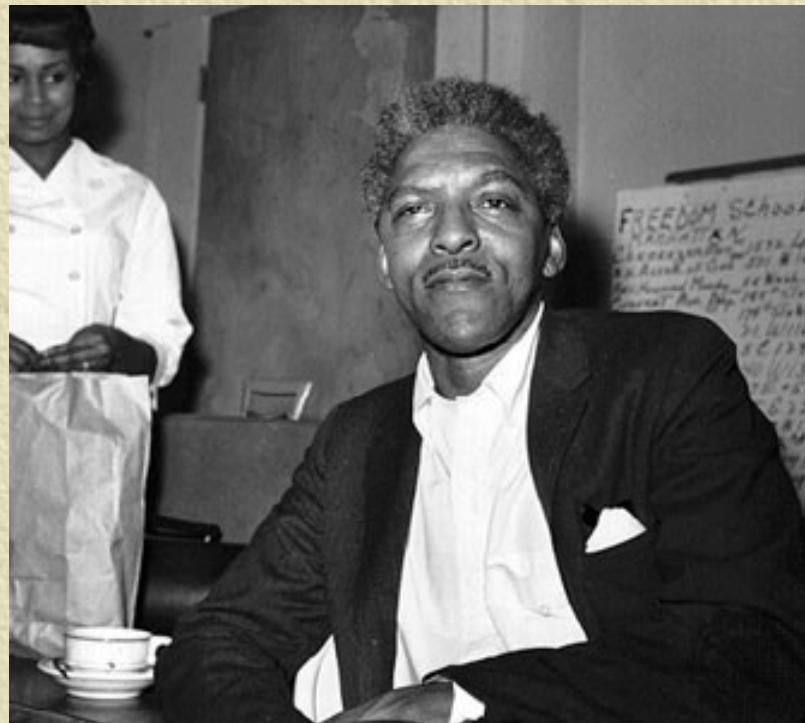
c. 1940

Duke Ellington leads his greatest band, including bassist Jimmy Blanton, saxophonist Ben Webster, trumpeter Cootie Williams, and composer-arranger Billy Strayhorn.



1941

Bayard Rustin, chief organizer of the 1963 March on Washington, organizes the New York branch of the Congress on Racial Equality.



1941

Following considerable protest, the War Department forms the all-black 99th Pursuit Squadron of the U.S. Army Air Corps, later known as the **Tuskegee Airmen**, commanded by



1942

Charles Richard Drew, developer and director of blood plasma programs during World War II, resigns as the armed forces begin to accept the blood of blacks but resolve to racially segregate the supply.

1942

The interracial

Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) is founded in New York City. Its direct-action tactics achieve national prominence during the Freedom Rides of 1961.

c. 1942

Bebop is born out of the musical experiments of jazz musicians in Harlem, including saxophonist Charlie Parker, trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, and pianist Thelonious Monk.

1943

Dancer **Bill "Bojangles"**

Robinson appears with singer Lena Horne in the wartime all-black musical film *Stormy Weather*.



1945

Ebony magazine is founded by John H. Johnson of Chicago. Modeled after *Life* but intended for the black middle class, the magazine is an instant success.



1945

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, is elected to the U.S. House of Representatives as a Democrat from Harlem, serving 11 successive terms.

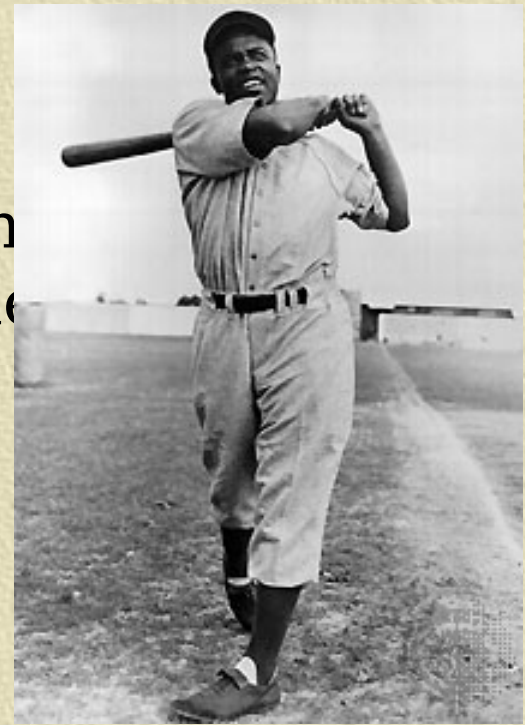
c. 1946

Saxophonist **Charlie Parker**, though plagued by drug abuse, produces many of the finest recordings of his career, including "Now's the Time," "KoKo," "Yardbird Suite," and "Ornithology."



1947

Jackie Robinson joins the Brooklyn Dodgers, becoming the first black baseball player in the major leagues.



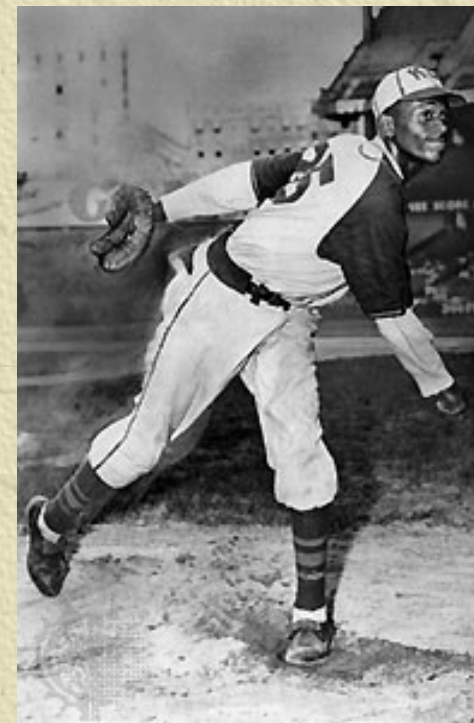
1947

Historian **John Hope Franklin** gains international attention with the publication of *From Slavery to Freedom*, an enduring survey of African-American history.



1948

Satchel Paige, legendary baseball pitcher of the Negro leagues, finally enters the majors after the "gentlemen's agreement" prohibiting the signing of black players is relaxed.



1949

Not satisfied with *Billboard* magazine's label of "race records" for its black music chart, Jerry Wexler, a white reporter at the magazine, introduces the designation "**rhythm and blues.**"

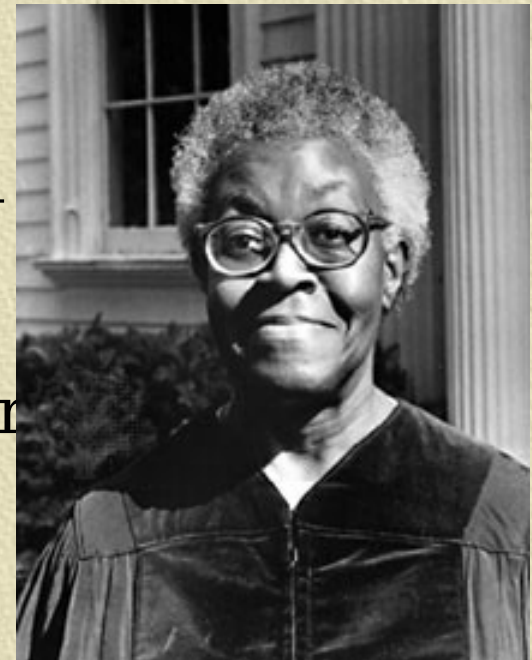
1950

Ralph Bunche is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work as United Nations mediator in the Arab-Israeli dispute in Palestine.



1950

Gwendolyn Brooks is awarded the Pulitzer Prize for poetry for *Annie Allen* (1949), becoming the first African-American writer to win the award.



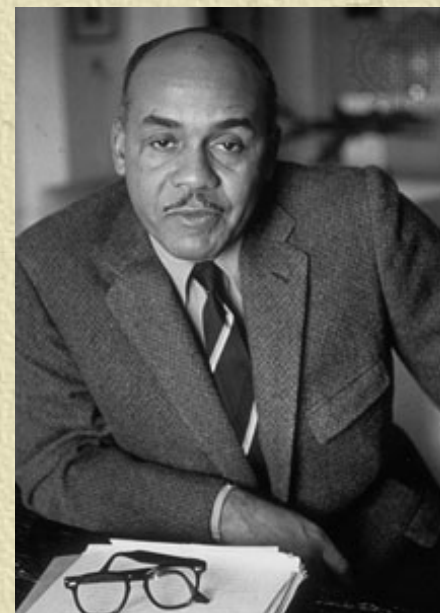
1950

After refusing to disavow his membership in the Communist Party, **Paul Robeson**--singer, actor, and activist--has his passport withdrawn by the U.S. State Department.



1952

Ralph Ellison publishes his masterpiece, *Invisible Man*, which receives the National Book Award in 1953.



1954

On May 17 the U.S. Supreme Court rules unanimously in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* that racial segregation in public schools violates the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

1954

In the World Series against the Cleveland Indians, New York Giants outfielder *Willie Mays* makes "the catch." The extraordinary over-the-shoulder catch remains one of the most talked-about plays in baseball history.



1955

Lynchings continue in the South with the brutal slaying of a 14-year-old Chicago youth, Emmett Till, in Money, Miss. *Jet* magazine publishes a picture of the mutilated corpse.

1955

Rosa Parks, secretary of the Montgomery, Ala., chapter of the NAACP, refuses to surrender her seat when ordered by a local bus driver, leading to the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955-56.



1955

Opera diva **Leontyne Price** is triumphant in the title role of the National Broadcasting Company's Tosca, making her the first black to sing opera on television.



1955

Singer and guitarist **Chuck Berry** travels from St. Louis to Chicago, recording "Maybellene," an immediate sensation among teenagers. The hit helps shape the evolution of rock and roll.

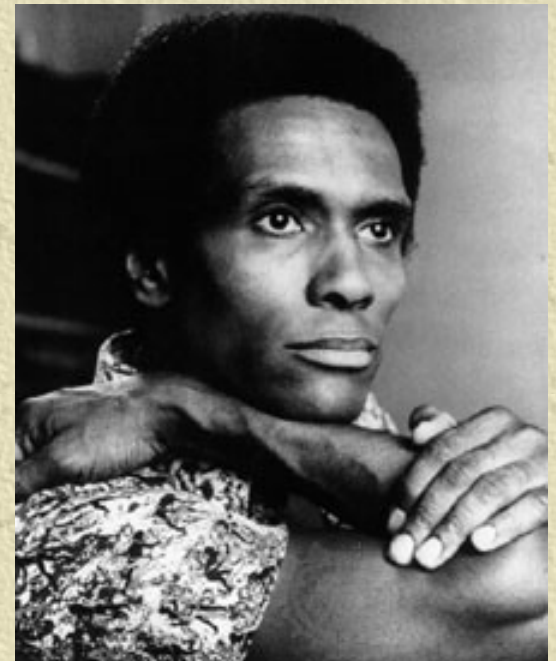


1956

Clifford Brown, the most influential trumpeter of his generation, dies at the age of 25 in a car accident. Noted for his lyricism and grace of technique, Brown is a principal figure in the hard-bop idiom.

1956

Arthur Mitchell, future director of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, becomes the only black dancer in the New York City Ballet. George Balanchine creates several roles especially for him.



1956

Tennis player **Althea Gibson** becomes the first African-American to win a major title--the Wimbledon doubles--as well as the French singles and doubles and Italian singles.



1957

The **Southern Christian Leadership Conference**

is established by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., and others to coordinate and assist local organizations working for the full equality of African-

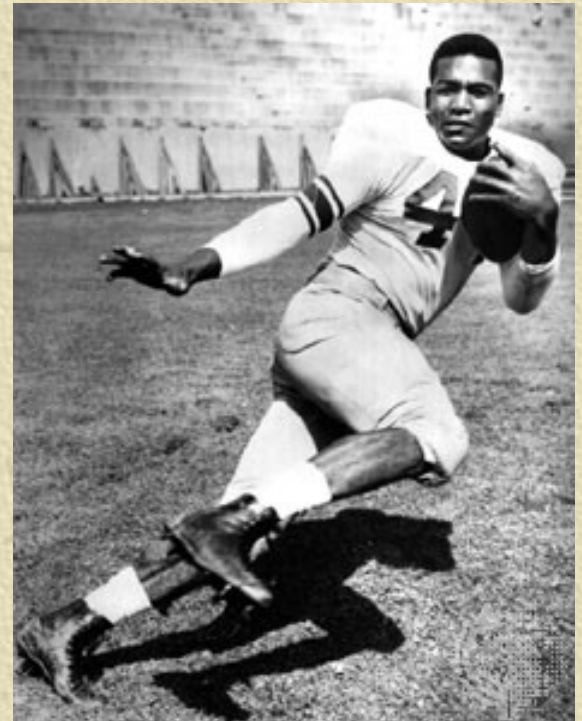


1957

President Dwight D. Eisenhower orders federal troops into Little Rock, Ark., after unsuccessfully trying to persuade Governor Orval Faubus to give up efforts to block **desegregation** at Central High.

1957

Fullback **Jim Brown** begins his professional football career with the Cleveland Browns. He leads the National Football League in rushing for eight of his nine seasons.



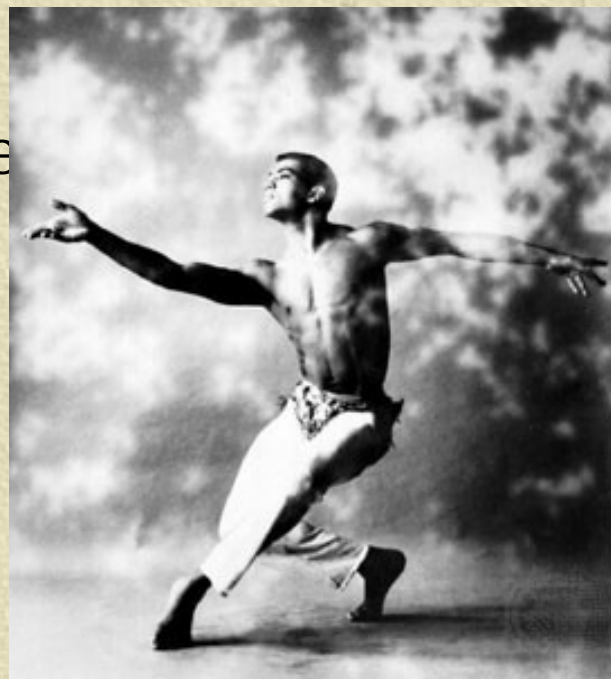
1958

Boxer **Sugar Ray Robinson**, considered by many to be the greatest fighter in history, wins back the middleweight title for the last time by defeating Carmen Basilio in a savage fight.



1958

The **Alvin Ailey** American Dance Theater is formed. Composed primarily of African-Americans, the dance company tours extensively both in the United States and abroad.



1958

Mahalia Jackson, known as the "Queen of Gospel Song," joins Duke Ellington in his gospel interlude *Black, Brown, and Beige* at the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival.



1959

Singer **Ray Charles** records "What'd I Say," which becomes his first million-seller, and exemplifies the emergence of soul music, combining rhythm and blues with gospel.



1959

Trumpeter **Miles Davis** records *Kind of Blue*, often considered his masterwork, with composer-arranger-pianist Bill Evans and tenor saxophonist John Coltrane.



1959

Raisin in the Sun, by **Lorraine Hansberry**, becomes the first drama by a black woman to be produced on Broadway. The 1961 film version features Sidney Poitier and receives a special award at Cannes.



1959

Motown Records is founded in Detroit, Mich., by Berry Gordy, Jr. The "Motown sound" dominates black popular music through the 1960s and attracts a significant white audience as well.



1959

Baseball player **Ernie Banks**, regarded as one of the finest power hitters in the history of the game, is named the National League's Most Valuable Player for a second consecutive season.



1959

Pioneer free jazz musician **Ornette Coleman** and his quartet play for the first time at New York's Five Spot Café. The historic performance yields a highly polarized reaction from the audience.



1960

Jim Stewart and Estelle Axton found Stax Records of Memphis, Tenn., which comes to define the Southern **soul music** sound, including such artists as Sam and Dave, Booker T. and the MGs, and Otis Redding.

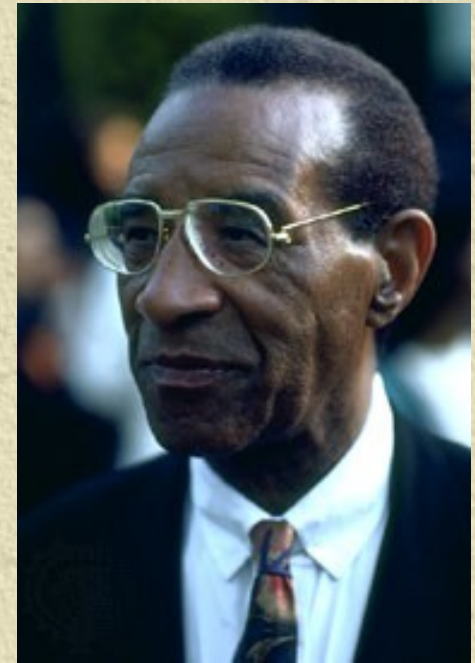
1960

The **sit-in** movement is launched at Greensboro, N.C., when black college students insist on service at a local segregated lunch counter.



1960

Inspired by the sit-in movement, jazz drummer **Max Roach** composes and records the historic "Freedom Now Suite" with lyricist Oscar Brown, Jr., and his wife, vocalist Abbey Lincoln.



1961

Testing **desegregation** practices in the South, the Freedom Rides, sponsored by CORE, encounter overwhelming violence, particularly in Alabama, leading to federal intervention.

1961

Whitney Young is appointed executive director of the National Urban League. He builds a reputation for his behind-the-scenes work to bridge the gap between white political and business leaders and poor blacks.



1962

Basketball player

Wilt Chamberlain becomes the first player to score more than 4,000 points in regular-season National Basketball Association games.



1962

The New Yorker magazine publishes a long article by author **James Baldwin** on aspects of the civil-rights struggle. The article becomes a best-seller in book form as *The Fire Next Time*.



1963

Medgar Evers, Mississippi field secretary for the NAACP, is shot and killed in an ambush in front of his home, following a historic broadcast on the subject of civil rights by President John F. Kennedy.



1963

In Birmingham, Ala., Police Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor uses water hoses and dogs against **civil-rights** protesters, many of whom are children, increasing pressure on President John F. Kennedy to act.

1963

The Reverend **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, writes "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" to eight clergymen who attacked his role in Birmingham. Widely reprinted, it soon becomes a classic of protest literature.



1963

Sidney Poitier wins the Academy Award as best actor for his performance in *Lilies of the Field*. In 1967 he stars in two films concerning race relations, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* and *In the Heat of*



1963

The **Civil Rights Movement** reaches its climax with a massive march on Washington, D.C. Among the themes of the march "for jobs and freedom" was a demand for passage of the Civil Rights Act.

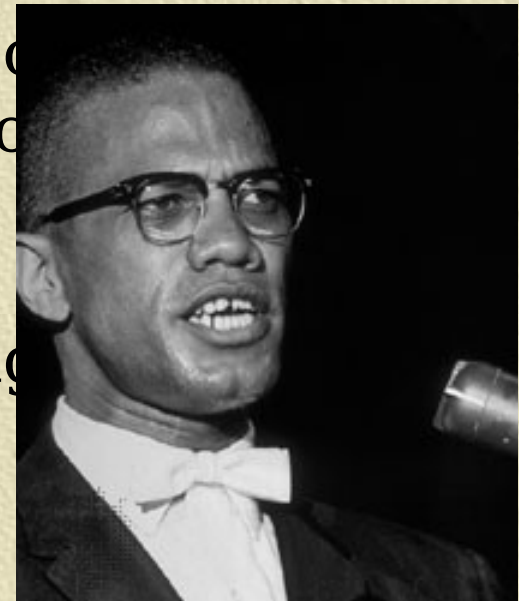


c. 1963

Free jazz, an approach to jazz improvisation that emerged during the late 1950s, gains momentum and influence among a wide variety of jazz artists led by Ornette Coleman, Eric Dolphy, Sun Ra, and others.

1964

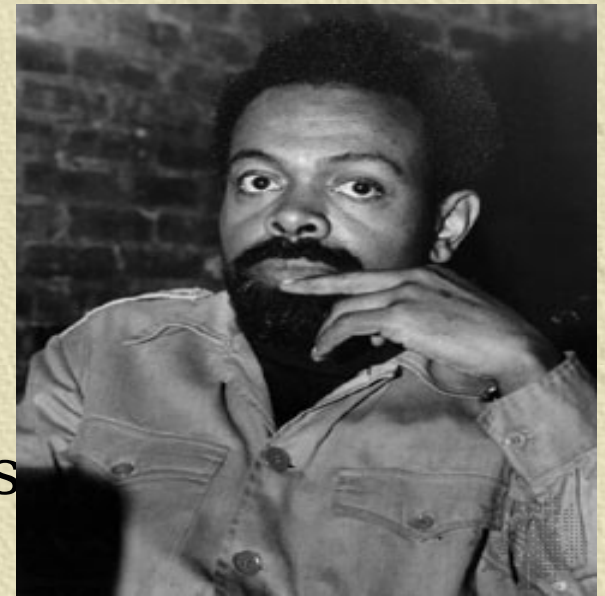
Malcolm X leaves the Nation of Islam, announcing the formation of his own religious organization. He makes the pilgrimage to Mecca, modifying his views on black separatism upon his return.



1964

LeRoi Jones's play *Dutchman* appears off-Broadway and wins critical acclaim. The play exposes the suppressed anger and hostility of American blacks toward the dominant white

President Lyndon Johnson signs the **Civil Rights Act** into law, giving federal law enforcement agencies the power to prevent racial discrimination in employment, voting, and the use of public facilities



1964

The Reverend **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, is awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in Oslo,



1964

Bob Gibson, phenomenal pitcher for the St. Louis Cardinals, begins an unprecedented streak of seven straight World Series wins by taking Game Five and, on two days' rest, Game Seven.



1964

Jazz saxophonist **John Coltrane** records his masterpiece, *A Love Supreme*.

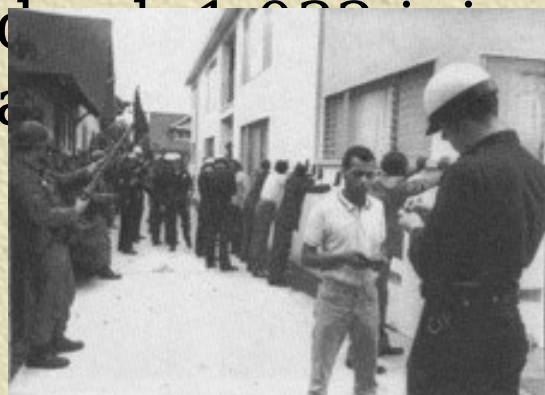


1965

The **Voting Rights Act** is passed following the Selma-to-Montgomery March, which garnered the nation's attention when marchers were beaten mercilessly by state troopers at the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

1965

The Watts area of Los Angeles explodes into violence following the arrest of a young male motorist charged with reckless driving. At the riot's end, 34 are



1966

The **Black Panther Party** for Self-Defense is founded in Oakland, Calif., by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, with the original purpose of protecting residents from acts of police brutality.

1966

Charting a new course for the Civil Rights Movement, **Stokely Carmichael**, chairman of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, chooses to use the phrase "black power" at a rally during the



1966

Bill Russell, one of the greatest defensive centres in the history of basketball, becomes the first black coach of a major professional sports team (the Boston Celtics) in the United States.



1966

The African-American holiday of **Kwanzaa**, patterned after various African harvest festivals, is created by Maulana Karenga, a black-studies professor at California State University at Long Beach.

1967

After being denied his seat in the Georgia state legislature (after being duly elected) for opposing U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, civil-rights activist **Julian Bond** is finally sworn in on January 9.



1967

Singer **Aretha Franklin** releases a series of hits including "I Never Loved a Man," "Baby, I Love You," and "Respect," the last of which becomes something of an anthem for the Civil Rights Movement



1967

Heavyweight champion **Muhammad Ali** refuses to submit to induction into the armed forces. Convicted of violating the Selective Service Act, Ali is barred from the ring and stripped of his title



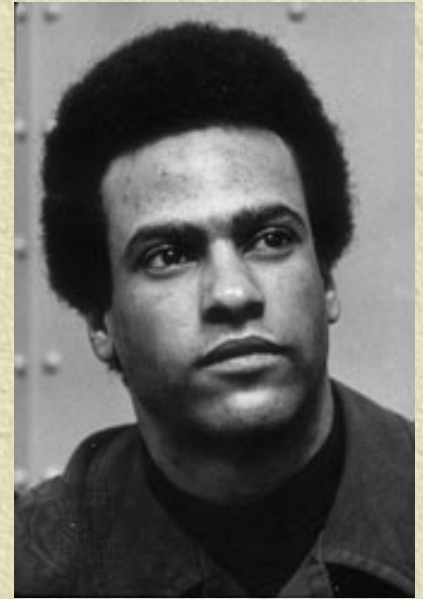
1967

Blues and rock guitarist **Jimi Hendrix** makes his spectacular debut at the Monterey International Pop Festival, following the successful release of his first album, *Are You Experienced?*



1967

Huey P. Newton, cofounder of the Black Panther Party, is convicted on a charge of manslaughter in the death of an Oakland policeman, leading to the rapid expansion of the party nationwide.



1968

Eldridge Cleaver, the Black Panther Party's minister of information, publishes his autobiographical volume *Soul on Ice*.



1968

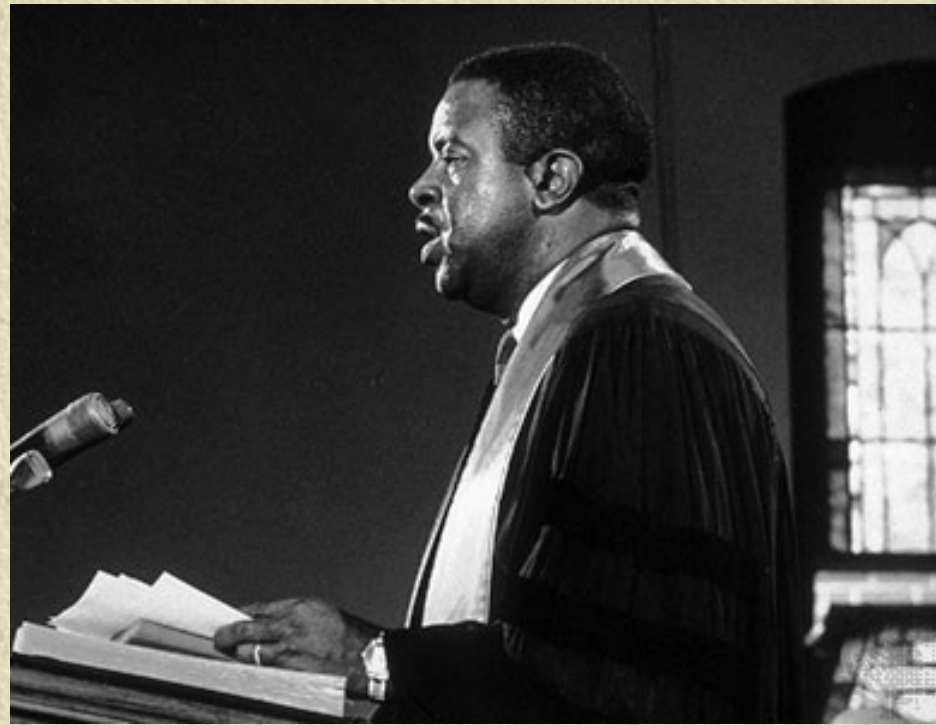
On April 4 the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., is assassinated in Memphis, Tenn. The



1968

Following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., **Ralph Abernathy** succeeds him as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, carrying out the SCLC's Poor People's Campaign.

Bob Beamon sets the world record in the long jump at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City, surpassing the previous mark by 21-3/4 inches.



1968

After winning the gold medal, sprinter **Tommie Smith** and teammate John Carlos give a black-power salute during the awards ceremony, leading to their suspension by the U.S. Olympic Committee.



1968

Actor **James Earl Jones** wins acclaim and a Tony award for his portrayal of legendary boxer Jack Johnson in Howard Sackler's play *The Great White Hope* and later stars in the film version (1970).



1968

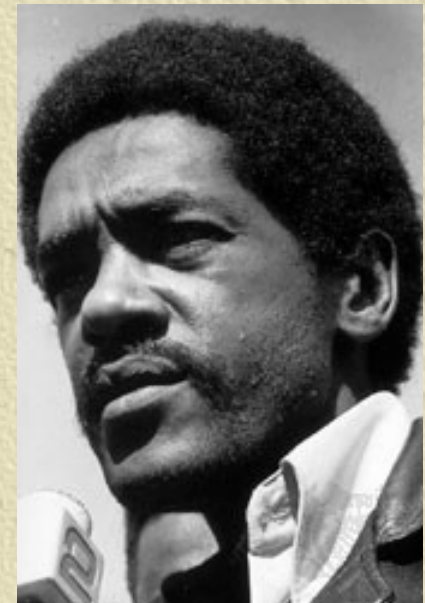
Amira Baraka (formerly LeRoi Jones) and Larry Neal publish *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing* in the spirit of the **black aesthetic movement**, which sought to create a populist art form to promote black nationalism.

Shirley Chisholm becomes the first black American woman to be elected to the U.S. Congress, defeating civil-rights leader James Farmer.



1969

Black Panther Party cofounder **Bobby Seale** is ordered bound and gagged by the judge in the Chicago "conspiracy trial" after protests by Seale that he was being denied his constitutional right to counsel.



1970

Baseball player **Curt Flood**, with the backing of the Major League Baseball Players Association, unsuccessfully challenges the reserve clause but begins its eventual demise.

1971

Author **Ernest J. Gaines** publishes *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, a fictional remembrance by an elderly black woman of the years between Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement.

1971

Angela Davis is arraigned on charges of murder, kidnapping, and conspiracy for her alleged participation in a violent attempted escape from the Hall of Justice in Marin county, Calif., in 1970.



1972

Writer **Ishmael Reed** publishes *Mumbo Jumbo*. Its irreverent tone successfully revives the tradition of the black satiric novel.



1974

Baseball player **Hank Aaron** hits his 715th home run, breaking Babe Ruth's record, which had stood since 1935.



1974

Actress Cicely Tyson is lauded for her role as the 110-year-old title character of the television drama *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, which was adapted from the Ernest J. Gaines novel.



1974

Boxer George Foreman, previously undefeated in professional bouts, falls to Muhammad Ali in eight rounds at Kinshasa, Zaire--the storied "Rumble in the Jungle."



1975

Playwright Ntozake Shange receives considerable acclaim for her theatre piece *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow Is Enuf*.



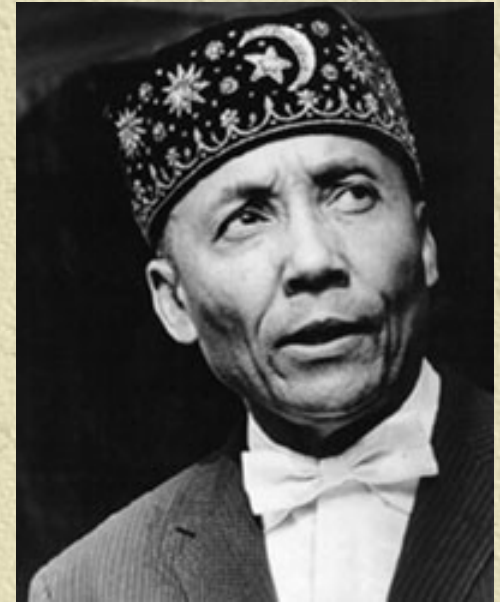
1975

Tennis player Arthur Ashe wins the singles title at Wimbledon, becoming the first black winner of a major men's singles championship.



1975

Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam, dies. After his son renames the organization and integrates it into orthodox Islam, Minister Louis Farrakhan reclaims and rebuilds the Nation of Islam.



1976

Barbara Jordan, congressional representative from Texas, delivers the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention, confirming her reputation as one of the most eloquent public



1977

Alex Haley's *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* (1976) is adapted for television, becoming one of the most popular shows in the history of



1977

Benjamin L. Hooks becomes the executive director of the NAACP, succeeding Roy Wilkins. Stressing the need for affirmative action and increased minority voter registration, Hooks serves until 1993.

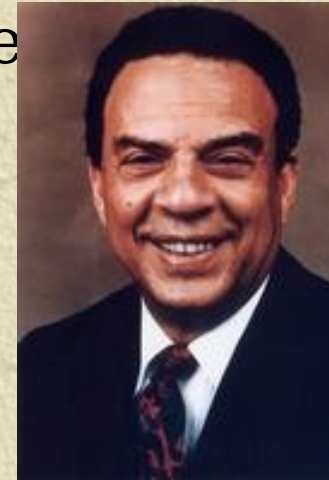
1978

In *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, the Supreme Court rules against fixed racial quotas but upholds the use of race as a factor in making decisions on admissions for professional schools.



1978

Sociologist William Julius Wilson publishes *The Declining Significance of Race*, which maintains that class divisions and global economic changes, more than racism, created a large underclass.



1981

Civil-rights leader Andrew Young is elected mayor of Atlanta, Ga., an office he holds through 1989.

1982

Playwright Charles Fuller wins the Pulitzer Prize for drama for *A Soldier's Play*, which examines conflict among black soldiers on a Southern army base during World War II.



1982

Singer Michael Jackson creates a sensation with the album *Thriller*, which becomes

1983 of the most
Written by Alice Walker
receives the Pulitzer
Prize for *The Color Purple*.
copies.



1983

Harold Washington wins the Democratic nomination by upsetting incumbent Mayor Jane Byrne and Richard M. Daley and is elected the first African-American mayor of Chicago.



1983

Civil-rights leader Jesse Jackson announces his intention to run for the Democratic presidential nomination, becoming the first African-American to make a serious bid for the presidency.



1984

The Cosby Show, starring comedian Bill Cosby, becomes one of the most popular situation comedies in television history and is praised for its broad cross-cultural appeal and avoidance of racial stereotypes.



1988

Playwright August Wilson receives the Pulitzer Prize for *Fences*, winning it again for *The Piano Lesson* in 1990. Both are from his cycle of plays chronicling the black American experience.



1987

Basketball forward Julius Erving, noted for his balletic leaps toward the basket and climactic slam dunks, retires after becoming the third professional player to score a career total of 30,000 points.



1989

President George Bush nominates Colin Powell chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, making him the first black officer to hold the highest military post in the United States.



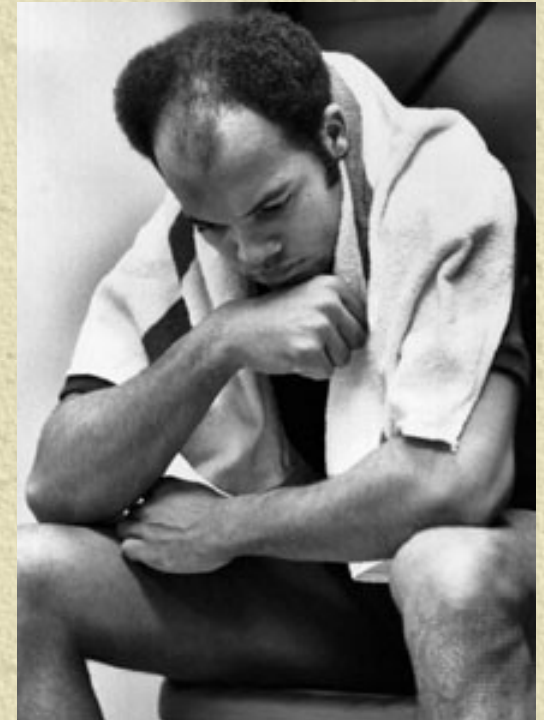
1989

Modern dancer Judith Jamison becomes the artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, following Ailey's death.



1990

John Edgar Wideman becomes the first author to twice receive the prestigious PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction, for his novels *Sent for You Yesterday* (1983) and *Philadelphia Fire* (1990).



1990

Author Walter Mosley publishes his first novel, *Devil in a Blue Dress*, which introduces the enduring character of "Easy" Rawlins, an unwilling amateur detective from the Watts section of Los Angeles in

1990

Jazz drummer Art Blakey dies. Since founding the Jazz Messengers in 1954, he is responsible for nurturing generations of young jazz musicians, including Clifford Brown, Jackie McLean, and Lee Morgan.

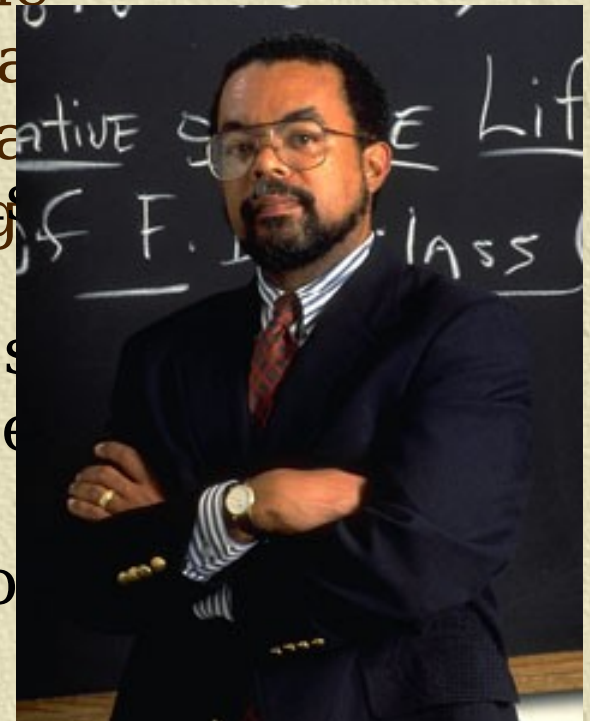


1991

The Senate votes 52-48 to confirm the nomination of Justice Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court following charges of sexual harassment by former aide Anita Hill during confirmation hearings.

1991

With much fanfare, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., is appointed W.E.B. Du Bois professor of humanities at Harvard University, where he proceeds to build the university's Department of Afro American Studies.



1992

Riots break out in Los Angeles, sparked by the acquittal of four white police officers caught on videotape beating Rodney King, a black motorist. The riots cause at least 55



1992

West Indian poet and playwright Derek Walcott receives the Nobel Prize for Literature.

1992

Author Terry McMillan publishes *Waiting to Exhale*, which follows four middle-class women, each of whom is looking for the love of a worthy man. The book's wild popularity leads to a film adaptation.



1992

Mae Jemison becomes the first African-American woman astronaut, spending more than a week orbiting Earth in the space shuttle *Endeavour*.



1992

Carol Moseley-Braun becomes the first African-American woman elected to the U.S. Senate, representing the state of Illinois.



1993

Poet Maya Angelou, author of the autobiographical work *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970), composes and delivers a poem for the inauguration of President Bill Clinton.



1993

Cornel West, progressive postmodern philosopher, finds a mainstream audience with the publication of his text *Race Matters*, which closely examines the black community



1993

Poet Rita Dove, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Thomas and Beulah*, is chosen as poet laureate of the United States.



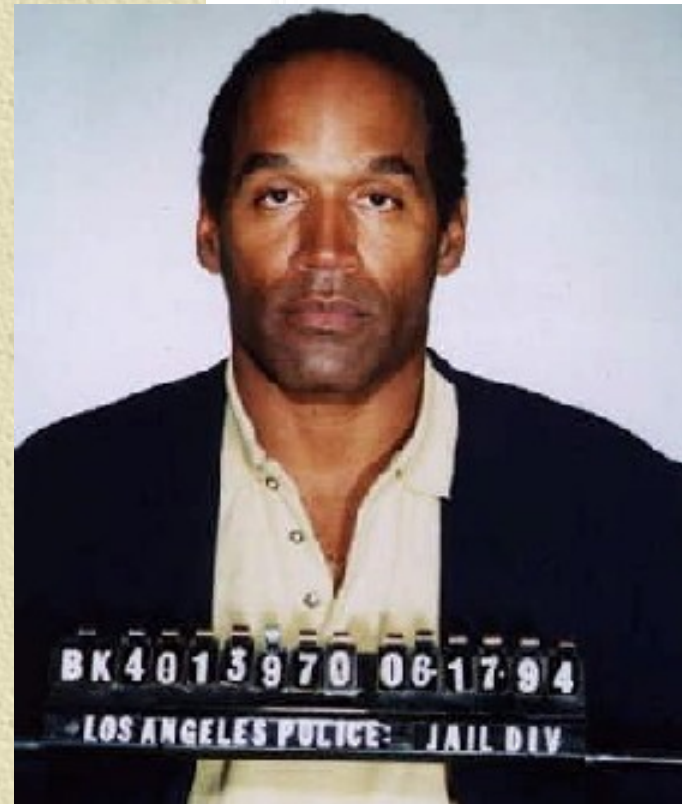
1993

Writer Toni Morrison, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction for *Beloved*, receives the Nobel Prize for Literature.



1995

In one of the most celebrated criminal trials in American history, former running back O.J. Simpson is acquitted of the murders of his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ro:



1995

Minister Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, rises to the height of his

1996

influence as the most prominent organizer of the "Million Man March" of African-American men first man to win gold medals in the 200

metres and the 400 metres, setting a 200-



1997

Michael Jordan, often considered the greatest all-around player in the history of basketball, leads the Chicago Bulls to their fifth championship.

